1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[The City Greek]

An additional resource of the city Greek after the fall of the Byzantine Empire was the respect which other peoples paid to Greek cultural traditions. The city Greek could rest at times on the laurels of his ancestors, or he could command a situation by assuming superiority based on the glory of his past. Furthermore, when days looked darkest, from late in the eighteenth century on down, he could count on the support of classic-minded benefactors of the Western world. There remained also the implication of the term *barbarian* for the non-Greek; this did not die out with ancient Greece but continued to apply to other Balkan Christian groups which the city Greek assiduously tried to Hellenize. The city was dominant here, too, for this Hellenization proceeded outward from the city. The contact point was usually the Greek priest, with his loyalty to the urban Byzantine tradition, in a Slavic, Vlach, or Albanian village before the rise of national churches in the Balkans during the last century.[5]

This, then, is the proud and rich tradition of the contemporary city Greek — a tradition kept alive by the schools, the church, and by the admiration of many non-Greek scholars seeking to trace the origin of Western democracy to its pristine source in the pre-Christian Greek city-state.

Also helping to keep the tradition alive are the few leisured families, some of whom have highly placed relatives scattered throughout the continent of Europe, as well as the growing intelligentsia and the merchants for whom the city is a natural habitat. Even the urban laborer, whether a skilled worker in a textile plant or an unskilled hod carrier on a construction project, has many of the same traits as the members of the middle and upper classes: in his cafés and *tavernas*, the worker reveals the same zest for life as well as some of the same preoccupations with his daily lot. Yet members of the new intelligentsia, Athenian politicians, and businessmen still have many relatives in the provinces with whom they are in frequent contact and to whom city ways are steadily spreading.

The city Greek's supreme self-confidence, arising out of these traditions of power and glory, is shown in almost any discussion overheard at the cafés where the Greek urbanite meets his friends to argue about anything and everything.[6] His gestures are as eloquent as his words, as Robert P. T. Coffin said so well in his poem, "Greek Hands Are the Greek":

> Greek hands are tongues,
> They are tails of dogs;
> They are also Plato's
> Dialogues.[7]

Completely sure that his ideas on public questions are as sound as those of any cabinet minister or newspaper editor, the city Greek takes great pleasure in expounding these ideas.[8] An incident of half a century ago, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, is still told with amusement by Athe-

1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

423 474 241 the smallest holdings, must have found sweet consolation in knowing that now many of their more advantaged village neighbors wish to join the cooperative pool. But this poses a problem. "How," the secretary asked anxiously, "can we calculate what arrangement to make with these people? How can we know what to charge them for the risk we took, the major expenses we bore? Certainly, now that we have succeeded, it would not be fair for them to come in and benefit free of cost from the pioneering work that we have done."

As these cooperative members talked of their plans, their eyes glowed with happiness and enthusiasm. The men had concrete proposals to solve other problems. They expect to shift from sole concentration upon grain production to more diversified farming, including livestock and poultry production, the raising of dry legumes and other crops that tend to give employment to the able-bodied members of the cooperating families.

International recognition as well as scientific farming is coming to Nees Karyes. Today there are people from Yugoslavia and Israel, as well as touring Americans, who have seen the way some of the peasant families in this village of Thessaly set about solving their problem of too little land in too many strips cultivated in unscientific ways. The secret of this undertaking, in great part at least, lies in the feeling of responsibility on the part of those who participate, since they originated and now conduct and plan for the cooperative which they jointly own.

Pressure on the Land

161 241 511 Most rural Greeks, however, struggle along with insufficient resources and with no cooperative venture such as Nees Karyes to give them hope. A village cobbler from Karpenesi in Central Greece explained the matter in this way: "There has been such an increase in population that the fields are no longer sufficient. The village child today lives more poorly than did his father as a child, because there are more mouths to feed and no added resources."

A well-informed Greek official put the problem in excellent perspective: "Today there is less income per family, less food, and the land values go up. Those that have more land become better off, leading to totally new economic and social distinctions in the villages. Many of our farmers are trying to make a living on such small farms that all they produce is hate. The main problem of the Greek farm family is the population problem. There are too many people. The villager with nothing to do has no place to go in search of work. That is why you see here in Athens many strong, healthy men selling matches. They have no work to do either in their villages or here in the city."

What the Greek villagers are up against in one part of the Peloponnesos is revealed in *Greece, Ripe for Improvement:*

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Social Class in the Village

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The notables just described constitute the village élite; they are at the top of the status system and represent the village's contact with the outside world. If they are originally from outside, they are supposed to possess the qualities that the peasants ascribe to the educated city person. Their reputation in turn is based largely on the traditional classical education which sets them apart from those less fortunate. As one commentator pointed out: "The civil servant or poor lawyer has little out of life other than his prestige. This takes the form of petty autocracy and the assumption of superiority over the nonprofessional classes." Such a person coming to live in the village feels it incumbent upon him to maintain something of a social gulf between him and the peasants, who also share this feeling. But this "assumption of superiority" is in itself not enough. It will wear thin after a while if the individual does not prove himself competent in his job or show an understanding of the problems that the villagers face. Even if he does it arrogantly, he nevertheless must produce some benefits for the villagers. There is a shrewd practicality in the Greek peasant with which any intellectual has to reckon.

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Those notables who are from the village, whether educated or not, must also possess those qualities stressed locally. To some extent, they have to fit into the value systems of both the city and the village, not favoring one so much that they alienate those subscribing to the other.

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Very few studies have been made of the status distinctions in Greek villages, with the result that we cannot prove or disprove the existence of regional differences in ascribing status. In a Greek community, as in an American one, people when asked about class differences will be apt to deny them, claiming, "everybody here is as good as everybody else. We have no class distinctions." But as the questioner probes, he learns that one part of the community is considered a very good residential area and another part very poor; some families are at the very top of the social scale for a variety of reasons, others are generally recognized to be at the bottom, and those in between can be sorted out in a loose way according to the criteria (or social values) prevailing in that place. John Photiadis lists the following as the factors for class distinction in the Macedonian village he studied: education; occupation; money; family name; approved achievement; community activities; origin (whether refugee or not); area of residence. On the basis of these he delineates three classes in a larger-than-average village:

The *upper class* consisting of professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers), tobacco merchants, larger storekeepers, and office managers.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

565 The *second class* consisting of small storekeepers, farm owners, and skilled workers.

The *third class* consisting of persons not quite acceptable by society.[5]

Although this scheme is not precise and is difficult to apply in its present form to other villages in Greece, it does tend to stress the economic and occupational factors which play an important part throughout the country. This is particularly borne out in the studies of the Near East Foundation, to which references have already been made in preceding chapters. In two of their villages there seemed to be no class differences, but in others these were recognized and explained as follows, with each paragraph applying to a different community:

The economic position of the person is all-important. Those who are well-to-do and willing to help another in time of need rank high. Family and education play little or no role.

There are no noticeable differences in the village, but the villager who is financially better off than his neighbor is accorded a somewhat higher place.

Although there are no obvious class distinctions, the farmers who are better off are honored if they are not too conservative, which most of them tend to be. The priest, community president, cooperative president and certain village councilmen form the highest social class due to their judgment, diplomacy, education and vision.

Wealth is the only determining factor in this village.

Economic factors are most significant. The richer have the higher position. Shopowners are higher than farmers. People value a person's ability to help others in time of need or to promote the interest of the village. Family background is minor.[6]

565 555 These statements show that in Greek villages it is possible for an individual who is honorable and good to gain recognition even though the reputation of his family might not be very high. Without any doubt, what is most important is the financial ability of a family to afford education for its children which, in turn, provides them with a means for occupational advancement. The status of the family with several highly educated people is almost invariably higher than that of the family where no one has gone beyond grade school.

565 554 One must not assume, however, that the status system in the Greek village is something rigid or exclusively hereditary. It is unusually mobile. This is borne out by Photiadis when he compares the pre- and postwar class structure of his village:

Social mobility became easier after the war except for the upper class. It became much more difficult to move to the upper class. The high prices of tobacco before the war gave a number of people the opportunity to be close to

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the economic level of doctors or large storekeepers. Now this factor has diminished considerably concerning tobacco producers and has also affected smaller storekeepers, allowing less chance for them to expand their enterprises.[4]

He concludes that the ends of the "social pyramid became closer and it is difficult to separate the second from the third class, while the upper class became smaller." Land ownership and money, two factors which were stressed before the war, are no longer very important, for a peasant can rent a field quite inexpensively. With the prices of tobacco as low as they are, land is not in as great demand.

Village Organizations

Almost every village today has one or more clubs or associations which have been promoted by governmental officials and people from the city in an effort to effect some change in the rural way of life. Most of these organizations appear to be well intentioned and are accepted as such by the local people, but this does not mean that the peasants become eager joiners or loyal members. Other village groups have much deeper local roots: mutual-aid groups and the cooperatives; the church board, the school board, and the community council. In many villages I inquired about the formally organized groups. Three widely scattered communities listed a variety of associations, some of which will be described more fully below:

Ano Kleitoria (Peloponnesos): community council, church board, school board, and Friends of the Forest.

Kalivi (Attica): the regular boards, five cooperatives, agro club, hunting club, home-economics club.

Polygyros (Chalkidike, Macedonia): the regular boards, two cooperatives (agricultural, apiary), boy scouts, lawyers' union, athletic club, professional union, medical union, olive-oil union, woman's philanthropic group.

One widespread and rapidly growing organization is the Rural Youth Club, which is modeled on the 4-H Club in the United States and promoted and supervised by the Extension Service of the Greek Ministry of Agriculture. Each member carries out an agricultural project, and together they operate a field owned by the club. In the Macedonian village referred to they also operate the village library located in the community building. They meet once a week to listen to a lecture, which is followed by recreational activities.

The women, too, have their own club. It is the home club or home-economics club similar to the Home Demonstration Club in the United States. It includes farm and nonfarm women, young and old. When field work is slack, the members attend classes in canning, sewing, and cooking, several times a month. The home agent helps them acquire knowledge and skill through lectures, demonstrations, and group participation. Often the club has its own workship and kitchen.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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Notes

Chapter I. The People of Greece

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1. This version of the legend was told by an old shepherd to a hunting party which had taken refuge in his hut from a storm brewing over Lake Stymphalia in the northern Peloponnesos. Mrs. Bessie Adossides, who served as my interpreter, had been in the party and told the story to me. For a less colorful version, see A. W. Gomme, *Greece* (London, 1945), p. 11. [124]

2. A prominent subgrouping running through these three divisions is that of the Asia Minor and other refugees who were settled in Greece in the 1920s. Also, divisions among the city Greeks appeared following the French Revolution, when commercial opportunities opened up, creating a new merchant bourgeoisie in contrast to the "old patriarchal class whose members were the political administrators of the Sublime Porte and whose strength lay in landed wealth and special prerogatives." See S. G. Chaconas, *Adamantios Korais: A Study in Greek Nationalism* (New York, 1942), p. 38. [563] [441] [565]

3. S. Manolas, in a personal conversation, pointed out three factors accounting for the settlement in cities of Greeks coming to America: as "late" immigrants, there was little land available to them for homesteading; they came over individually — not as families — and could not run a farm; they were not here to work the land, for Greece was still their home. They wanted to make money and go back, staying on here to take care of "one more dowry, one more acre to buy." For many, time ran out and they did not go back. To these one might also add the Greek's unfamiliarity with the mechanized agriculture found in the United States and the greater ease with which he found employment in the cities.

4. This point of view is borne out in an article by Anton-Hermann Chroust, "Treason and Patriotism in Ancient Greece," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, April 1954: "The democrats, like the oligarchs, bore their native city a quite strange kind of love: the desire to dominate it completely and, if necessary, to exterminate their political antagonists. . . . It would be difficult, indeed, to find a prominent Athenian politician, irrespective of his political persuasion, whose public actions were not motivated by partisanship or loyalty to some faction or club within the city rather than by true patriotism," p. 287.

5. The books dealing with the history of Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Rumania usually discuss the role of the Greek clergy in the spread of Greek culture. As one example, see N. Forbes and others, *The Balkans: A History of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Rumania, Turkey* (Oxford, 1915).

6. A good characterization of the city Greek by Dorothy Lee appears in Margaret Mead, ed., *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change* (Paris, UNESCO, 1953), p. 79: "The city Greeks consider themselves very different from the peasants. There is a vogue for peasant handicrafts but not for peasant attitudes. Urban Greeks like to take on the ways of foreigners, to use the products of technology, even the processed foods of technology. Many French and English words are used in their speech. [114]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Town Life]

sions, only to remember how precious a job is to every Greek, and how impossible it is for a man to throw up a position in disgust in the hope of finding another and better one. There are, however, other factors which make the position of wage and salary earners difficult, and foster chronic discontent among them.

Wages are low, and are constantly in danger of being undercut by young men coming from the villages in search of work. Such new arrivals can often afford to work for less than a regular urban resident, for they have no homes or families to maintain, and can, in summer at least, sleep outdoors and eat very little in order to save a small sum with which to return home in the fall. As a result, a large part of the building trades, for example, is in the hands of migrant labor. Unions can do little to improve wages or working conditions when dozens of applicants seek every job that opens, and are ready, if need be, to bid against one another in order to get employment at all. Moreover, the prestige accorded to white-collar work and to immunity from manual toil obviously puts the working class at a psychological disadvantage, and builds up a sense of grievance among those condemned to labor with their hands.

Like the hill villagers, the workingmen of the towns were deeply infiltrated by Communist propaganda during the second world war. Attacks upon the rich, as traitors to the nation and oppressors of the poor, won widespread response. And indeed, the conduct of the small group of wealthy men in Greece lent some color to the accusations which Communists launched against them. Most men of property felt it more vital to safeguard their possessions than to join in any active resistance to the German and Italian authorities. Many of them exhibited the same ruthlessness against everyone beyond the family circle that most Greeks exhibit, and did so even when people were actually starving in the streets, as they were in 1941. Acts of

[Town Life]

565 generosity and kindliness did something to redeem the balance,
578 but were comparatively rare. The wealthy classes did not, as a
669 rule, show much sign of social conscience or sense of obligation to the poor. Once again, the solidarity and exclusiveness of family sentiment interfered with larger loyalties and sympathies. The result was that antagonism between rich and poor broke out into the open during the war years, and has never since ceased to trouble the political stability of the country.

458 Economic conditions have been acting, for at least fifteen
465 years, to sharpen this feeling. Since 1941 Greece has experi-
578 enced a series of monetary inflations that raised prices, sometimes rapidly, sometimes more slowly, but always faster than adjustments were made in wage and salary scales. As prices outran wages, workingmen faced a series of crises, the more serious because their wage rates were low to begin with. Adjustments of wages, when they came, relieved the problem only temporarily until continuing inflation once again robbed the currency of part of its purchasing power.

The economic plight of white-collar employees was nearly the same as that of manual workingmen, for they, too, had to live on an income that regularly lagged behind the price level.
[554] Moreover, the fact that such persons had gone to school, and therefore felt they had a rightful claim to superior social status, did not make it easier for them to face a life of poverty. The fierce struggle to win a place in the government civil service was only matched by the chronic discontent of those who had succeeded in getting government jobs and then found that they could scarcely live on their salaries.

578 Fortunately for the political stability of the country, wage
669 earners and salaried classes are a minority in Greece. This is no
[565] more than a corollary of the small size and family character of most Greek economic undertakings. Nevertheless, if one adds the hillsmen of the countryside as a third more or less chroni-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Palec Corinthos

[Villages of the Plains]

Particularly fortunate conditions in Old Corinth – tourism, irrigation, the proximity to the Athens market, and the effective leadership of the village president – have permitted the villagers to maintain their old family customs almost unchanged, and in spite of the rapid growth of population which such customs entail, they have not had to sacrifice their standard of living. Instead, living conditions have improved, with electricity, tractors and the like.

This is a situation very rare in Greece. It makes Old Corinth the happiest village I visited, a community at peace with itself and with the world, mildly surprised by the prosperity that has descended upon it, and generally well content with the way things are going. The contrast is strong with the internal condition of the village in 1947, when, like Nea Eleftherohori, the community was sharply divided between left and right. In 1947, indeed, the bitterness between the two political parties was far deeper than in Nea Eleftherohori, for in Old Corinth the political lines were drawn, more or less exactly, between farmers and landless men, that is, between buyers and sellers of labor. Two particularly squalid "political" murders occurred within the village in the last days of the German occupation; and the Communist-inspired regime, which lasted for a few months in 1944, aroused strong revulsion among the substantial farmers. These memories now seem almost forgotten, though the sense of solidarity between rich and poor in Old Corinth is by no means so strong as the community feeling among the villagers of Nea Eleftherohori, where everybody is nearly equal economically.

The inequalities in landholding, and the existence of a fairly numerous landless class in the village, certainly constitute a potential source of trouble. If currant and tomato prices should fall, or if more migrants from the hills should come to the village and push wages down by competing for jobs in the fields, the existing harmony and general satisfaction could easily

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Paleo Corinthos

[Villages of the Plains]

621 break down. The more elaborate social stratification and intri-
578 cate economic integration which the development from simple
565 village into small town involves carries with it a special vulner-
ability: vulnerability to fluctuations in distant markets, and vul-
nerability to social stresses within the community itself. This is
perhaps the price Old Corinth has to pay for its remarkable eco-
nomic progress in recent years.

x178 This progress may remind us that there is another sense in
621 which the social structure of Old Corinth shows itself far more
556 flexible and hospitable to innovation than the other villages de-
scribed. For while family and marriage customs have not under-
gone important modification, the occupational patterns of the
community have shown important changes; and in at least one
instance a landless and once very poor man has risen to a posi-
tion of wealth and importance by becoming a successful mer-
chant. Old Corinth has given far more scope to individual and
cooperative enterprise than either Lofiscos or Nea Eleftherohori.
Yet this development, too, is in line with old Greek tradition.
The self-made man, particularly the self-made merchant or
storekeeper, rising to wealth and respectability by virtue of his
mother wit and shrewdness in buying and selling, has been a
prominent figure in Greek society for at least two centuries; and
it has always been the marginal man in the village social hier-
archy – the man who has had no land to keep him busy – who
has naturally gravitated to such occupations when opportunity
has opened. Innovation in Old Corinth has thus taken tradi-
tional forms.

x178 Since 1912, rural Greece has been fundamentally divided be-
184 tween villages like Old Corinth, which can look back to genera-
423 tions of substantially undisturbed evolution, and those villages
621 where within recent memory radical governmental intervention
entirely transformed earlier landholding patterns. The division
is geographical. In Old Greece, meaning Greece within the

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Villages of the Plains]

boundaries that existed before 1881, village life has not suffered drastic upheaval since 1821, if then. Changes have come slowly and by evolution. The case is far otherwise in New Greece – Thessaly, Macedonia, Epirus and Thrace. There the violent elimination of Turkish landlords and peasants through war was followed by governmental creation of egalitarian peasant communities. This amounted to an agrarian revolution from above, in some cases fully satisfying the peasants – as in Lofiscos – but often failing to do so, as in Nea Eleftherohori.

The slower evolution of village life in Old Greece has meant, at least until the present, the preservation of a fairly firm cake of custom, governing the daily lives of the inhabitants. In this respect, Old Corinth is quite typical. Consequently, in spite of the contrast between rich peasant and landless laborer, the social stratification within these peasant communities has not bred so many revolutionists as have been bred by the hardships of life in an equality of poverty, characteristic of many villages in the north. Conservatism, royalism, traditionalism have all centered in the south; while radicalism, republicanism, restlessness and revolution have found their strongest expression in the north.

Yet while these generalizations are true, I must hasten to add that the villages of the plains never were the main centers of political revolt. Too many had too much to lose in such communities. Rather it was in the hill villages, where life was harder and the prospect of maintaining a given standard of life was dimmer, that revolution found its most congenial ground. Since the latter part of the eighteenth century, if not before, this has been the really vulnerable point in Greek society, the source of major disturbance and of recurrent civil violence. In the hills, even more than in the plains, the future stability or instability of Greek society is likely to be decided in time to come, as it has in times past. Let us therefore leave the plains and turn to the hills.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

x 178 433 241 423 a crop of only about 30 okes of wheat per stremma (a little more than 4 bushels per acre), and are capable of doing that only for two or three years, after which time the field has to be abandoned for a while until its dubious fertility has been restored. The president of the village told me that he allows the villagers to clear land wherever they can find anything that seems worth clearing, even though this goes beyond the letter of the law and encroaches on what is properly common pasture.

x 178 313 314 433 The desperate effort to find more cultivable land throughout the interwar, wartime and postwar years reflects the growing exhaustion of the forests, upon which the majority of the village population have come to depend. The villagers have cut off the trees farther and farther up the mountain, until only a little scrub oak remains; and even this is so thin that a man has to work hard and long to collect enough wood to make a charcoal burning. Since World War II, indeed, it has become more usual [438] to sell the wood in its raw form, even though this multiplies transport problems, and means far less money per donkey-load delivered to Volos.

x 178 241 423 ● 565 578 427 Within the village itself bitter feelings began to rise during the interwar period. The three families that had turned to agriculture in 1905, thus securing possession of the only decent agricultural land in the whole village, were able to keep their farms together. In 1956, one of the three families had removed entirely to Volos, and was renting out its land on a sharecropping basis to poorer families in the village. The other two "rich" families (who by any standard other than that of Cherasia were still poor) were each represented in the village by a single household, presumably because other descendants of the original owners had left for town. The result was a striking economic contrast between the poor woodcutters, whose painfully cleared hillside patches were scarcely worth the labor of cultivation, and the "rich" families. Indeed, the members of the two village

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

households owning 100 stremmata each did not find it necessary to work the land themselves. Like the absentee in Volos, they also rented their fields on a sharecropping basis to the others. The president of the village in 1956 was the head of one of these households; he had let the nail of his little finger on one hand grow in order to prove to everyone that he was exempt from manual labor. He was also the only fat man I saw in the village.

The bad feeling in Cherasia was not simply a matter of economics, however. Shepherds have had a proud tradition in Greece. Heavy manual labor is beneath them, and they have always felt themselves superior to the grubbing farmers of the plains. Moreover, a tradition of violence has always lain near the surface among shepherds. In days not so very far past, it was part of the shepherd's job to protect his flock from wolves. Even today a few wolves are said to survive in remote parts of Greece; and whenever public order breaks down, far more dangerous two-footed wolves, armed with guns, quickly appear. The transition from shepherd to bandit has always been easy. A shepherd losing his flock must almost automatically become a two-footed wolf himself, preying on other shepherds or, better yet, on the fat, stolid landlords and peasants of the plain.

In view of these traditions, one can better understand the spirit of Cherasia. Free shepherds, traditionally ready for violence, were being ground down to a status beneath that of the weaklings who in 1905 had preferred the indignity of labor to the leisure of mountain pastures; and to the people of Cherasia this seemed a clear reversal of the proper social order. They were most unwilling to accept such a reversal. They were not farmers, and did not wish to become farmers. As a result, they did not do all they might have done to make their hillside agriculture rewarding. Field labor was, for them, a regrettable necessity, not a satisfying way of life. They made no effort at

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

x 178 terracing, attempted no planting of fruit trees or of vines, and
233 in general refused to borrow any of the traditional and very
241 effective methods of Greek Mediterranean agriculture, even
433 though there are villages on the other side of Mount Pelion, within less than two hours' walking distance, where these methods have been in use for centuries on land intrinsically no better than that of the Cherasia hillsides. (There is one important difference, however: because Cherasia's land faces north, toward the open Thessalian plain, cold winter winds blow across it and make olive cultivation impossible. But olive cultivation is and has always been the backbone of Mediterranean hillside agriculture. This undoubtedly is the reason why settlers from over the mountain never tried to exploit Cherasia's hillsides, leaving them to shepherds for winter pasture.)

x 178 The upshot of the history and traditions of Cherasia was that
● 565 even before World War II, a thoroughly revolutionary mood
578 prevailed in the village. The poor – which is to say nearly
669 everybody in the village except the three families – felt the
579 need to find a scapegoat for what was happening to them. They despised but also envied the three "rich" families, and felt that it would no more than serve them right to be plundered of all they had gained. The villagers also held the government and all other persons in authority vaguely responsible for the straits in which they found themselves. They could not help casting greedy eyes upon rich villages like Lofiscos, which lies within sight of Cherasia, a scant twenty miles across the flat Thessalian plain. But unlike most Greek villagers, they did not really want agricultural land; plunder was more in line with the tradition of the community.

726 The Communist-led guerrilla movement of World War II
669 therefore found unusually ready and unanimous support in Cherasia. No one was willing to tell me how many men from

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

worth, however, the records showed 45 births since 1951 as against 18 deaths, and everything I heard and observed in the village pointed to a very high rate of natural increase.

Marriages occur early. When nearly everyone lacks land that is worth much of anything, there is no tendency to wait until the new family can be assured a landed inheritance. One young man said, somewhat cynically: "What I had when I married was a donkey, an axe and a strong back. I still have all three, and three children as well." The donkey, I gathered, was his wife's contribution to the new household; the axe and the back, his own. This, it seems, is more or less normal in the village; and one can easily understand how a desire to escape the nagging poverty of the parental household would lead young men and girls into early marriage, in order at least to enjoy personal independence and the satisfactions of the marriage bed. Even though the rest of their traditional style of life seems on the verge of ruin, this still is possible. Feeling a general despair of ever being able to live decently, feeling also a certain reckless defiance of all forms of authority – including parental authority – there seems to persons such as the young man who spoke to me no reason not to marry as soon as one can find a partner.

In spite of the rebellious mood prevailing in Cherasia, the officials of the village in 1956, although supposedly elected, represented the extreme right. The president and secretary were both members of the "rich" families, possessing comparatively broad acres, and both were very emphatic and voluble in asserting that the only way to deal with Communists was to use force. Indeed, they said that peace could come to Cherasia and to Greece only when Russia was blown up by American atom bombs. How they were elected, I do not know, but I am certain the election was not a free one. Suspicion and thinly veiled hostility dominated the relation between the villagers and their official leaders.